

Education unions join forces to petition against pension cuts



General Secretaries from all seven education unions delivering the 'Decent Pensions' petition with over 150,000 signatures to the DfE.

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Monday 07 November 2011

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SFA Chief Profile



Geoff Russell talks to *FE Week* about 'complication'.

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FE Week Q&A



Graham Hoyle talks about short apprenticeships and more

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Funding will be cut if standards not met

FE Week Exclusive

Nick Reinis

@fenickr

NAS could withdraw funding from providers as they look into "every short apprenticeship"

Funding will be withdrawn from providers who fail to meet standards as government agencies bid to tackle short apprenticeships.

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) is working alongside the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to review every short apprenticeship programme.

It comes following the introduction of Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE) and a series of stories by *FE Week*, highlighting the concerns over the rising delivery of 12-week apprenticeships.

NAS say the review will "closely consider the circumstances of each short apprenticeship programme with the college or training provider" so they can "fully understand the delivery model and can make a judgement" on whether it meets SASE.

Ultimately, funding will be cut from those which do not come up to scratch.

A spokesperson for NAS said: "Throughout the review, our priority will be to remove apprenticeship funding from provision which fails to meet the required standard, while maintaining provision that supports

young people into employment or other training, as well as giving them the opportunity to progress onto an apprenticeship programme."

However, NAS also said they expect to find some programmes which, despite not meeting the SASE standards, "still provide appropriate and valuable training for young people" not in education, employment or training.

The spokesperson added: "We will work with the providers and employers of such provision, and where appropriate also with the YPLA and SFA, to secure suitable alternative funding where that is appropriate."

A spokesperson for the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) said John Hayes MP, the minister for further education, skills and lifelong learning, is in discussions with NAS over issues with apprenticeships.

She also said that of apprenticeships starting between August 1, 2010, and April 30, 2011, three per cent lasted less than thirteen weeks.

The spokesperson added: "NAS is scrutinising each of these programmes to ensure they are of a high

quality, ensure successful outcomes for companies and individuals and provide good value for public investment."

She also added: "Where apprenticeship provision does not meet the required standards, funding will be withdrawn."

Although NAS were unable to give further details on the review, including how many programmes it will affect, an investigation by *FE Week* on the agency's vacancy website found more than 700 listed for 12 or 16 weeks by De Vere Group.

The hotelier offers apprenticeships in customer service and professional cookery at nationwide De Vere Academy of Hospitality.

They are open to 16 to 24-year-olds, paying £104 per week (the minimum apprenticeship wage) for a 40 hour week over five days.

While acknowledging programmes delivered by De Vere do not meet the SASE requirements, NAS say they do provide "appropriate and valuable provision for young people" who want to work in the hospitality sector.

However, the NAS spokesperson said: "We intend to work with De

Vere and the Sector Skills Council for the hospitality sector; People 1st, to develop a tailored 'Access to Apprenticeship' pathway to meet the specific needs of employers in the sector that will offer a high quality opportunity to young people wanting to work in the sector.

"While we work together to identify an alternative source of funding, we will continue to support De Vere, young people and employers involved in the programme.

"All live De Vere vacancies posted on the apprenticeship vacancy site will indicate that the provision is under review and is likely to change."

Meanwhile, De Vere Group - which employs its apprentices under the 'Academy' brand and was formally known as the Alternative Hotel Group - said that they have been working with NAS for the last three months.

A spokesman for the firm said: "We are working closely with NAS and together we are confident we can agree a new delivery model that ensures we can continue to support employers and young people who want to work in the hospitality sector."

Apprenticeships



Analysis of apprenticeship starts as published in the October SFR

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Campus round-up



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Spooky fun!



Bored at a conference? Play Halloween spot the difference.

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Adult apprenticeships triple as youth unemployment soars

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New adult apprenticeships have hit a record high, adding to fears that the government skills drive is struggling to combat youth unemployment.

The number of new apprentices aged 25 and above rose by more than 250 per cent to 175,500 in 2010/11, making up more than a third of total starts.

The total number of new apprenticeships, published by the Data Service in the Statistical First Release (SFR), hit 442,700, up from 279,700 the previous year.

Meanwhile the number of new apprentices aged below 19 was up to 128,300, a 10 per cent increase on the previous 12 months.

Graham Hoyle, Chief Executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), said he wasn't surprised by the "plateauing" of apprentices aged 16 to 18: "We're talking about job creation and we're talking about the economy.

"For new apprenticeships, or even the conversion of apprenticeships, it means that young people have to have gone into a job and been converted.

"We're in a position now where jobs are simply not being created. So demographically, it's bound to happen."

The SFR found that there was similar movement in the number of new apprentices aged between 19 and 24, rising by almost 20 per cent to 138,900.

Professor Ewart Keep, from Cardiff University, said that the figures show a dilution in the apprenticeship brand.

Dyslexia Campaign Launched

Rhian Jones
@Journapprentice

Unionlearn, the education arm of the TUC, is launching a campaign to help employers understand more about dyslexia.

Events and assessments designed to help make workplaces more dyslexia friendly will take place during Dyslexia Awareness Week.

An online survey carried out by Unionlearn found that over half of their learning support representatives said workers with a learning disability had come across barriers while being trained for their job role.

Eighty per cent of representatives said they were aware of colleagues and workmates who had dyslexia, but almost two thirds had received no training in how to support them.

One representative said: "Often dyslexia isn't recognised for what it is. Managers seem to think that it is purely a difficulty with reading, when it can also lead to organisational difficulties."

A series of documents will be provided during the campaign to help negotiate dyslexia-friendly policies with managers and HR staff, and there will be an information toolkit available online.

The British Dyslexia Association estimates that ten per cent of the population are affected by dyslexia and research has found that more than 50 per cent of them keep it a secret.

The awareness week runs from October 31-November 6 and there are lots of events going on around the country to celebrate individual achievements, and encourage nationwide understanding.

De Vere defend apprenticeship programme

Nick Reinis
@fenickr

Hotel operator De Vere Group has come out in defence of its apprenticeship programme, following the announcement that they are under review.

Despite praising the "appropriate and valuable" contribution they make, NAS has confirmed that the programmes do not meet SASE and are "likely to change" with a new delivery model being worked on by both parties.

However, when contacted by FE Week the firm said they have helped address youth unemployment and achieved "outstanding" success rates.

A spokesman said: "We continue to work in close partnership with NAS and have been incredibly successful in training and developing hundreds of young people to really get started with their career in hospitality.

"As one of the largest independent hotel operators we know what industry needs. Working with our 370 industry partners, we have created a fantastic provision, which has been indicated to us by our apprentices.

"With outstanding achievement rates with



some particularly challenging young people, we are proud to be helping address the national issue of youth unemployment.

"In Stockport, where the first Academy was launched, there has been a sustained reduction of five per cent in the numbers of NEETS in the region. This has been directly attributed to the work done by the Academy.

"The De Vere group is incredibly proud of

the award winning Academy and we are, as always, in constant contact with our colleagues at NAS."

A spokesman for NAS added: "The De Vere programme has already supported hundreds of young people. The most recent information indicates 60 per cent of participants remain in employment, with a further 10 per cent going on to further education/training."

Heads of all seven education unions join forces to lobby Parliament over cuts to staff pensions

Nick Summers

@SummersNicholas

A petition opposing pension cuts was delivered to the Department for Education (DfE) by all seven education unions this morning.

The 'Decent Pensions' petition had more than 154,000 signatures from lecturers and head teachers.

Sally Hunt, General Secretary of University and College Union (UCU), said: "They're angry, they're hurt and they're also frightened."

Brian Lightman, General Secretary of Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), said: "The proposed cuts to pensions go too far, especially when there is absolutely no evidence that pensions are an unsustainable burden on the taxpayer."

"We hope MPs will put pressure on the Treasury to enter into open and genuine negotiations about reforms. If the government refuses to do this, many union members feel they will have no choice but to take industrial action."

Nick Gibb MP, Minister of State for Schools said in response: "We are listening, we do understand, and that's why we're all negotiating openly and honestly."

"We want this full process to result in a high quality, high benefits scheme that protects all the accrued rights which they (teachers) have built up over their careers, but is also sustainable in the long run."

More than 1,000 teachers and lecturers from across the education sector lobbied Parliament on Wednesday in a bid to stop cuts to their pensions.

Ian Cusack, Tyne Metropolitan College Branch Secretary (FE), was one of the lobbyists at Westminster, and said: "I don't imagine that there will be any particular change, but I think it's important to voice our disapproval to these changes that are being imposed on us."

Lecturers and college representatives arrived at Westminster with branded armbands, stickers and mini-placards. They slowly filed into Methodist Central Hall in the hope of meeting and discussing their concerns with MPs.

Gemma Charters, a lecturer at Liverpool Community College, said: "It's an opportunity to get together with other teachers and express how disgusted we are with the proposed cuts to pensions."

"It's an opportunity not just to be our own little isolated FE movement, but to be part of something bigger, part of teaching as a whole and talk about how dreadful we're being treated."

Under the new government proposals, contributions from lecturers in the FE sector will increase from 6.4 per cent to up to 9.8 per cent.

Ms Hunt said: "The reality is that the 3% hike which is being proposed by government is going nowhere near an individual's pension scheme. It is going directly to the treasury to offset public sector debt, which has been incurred as a result of the financial crisis."

"People are being asked in the public sector and FE in particular, on top of an increased workload, and on top of very, very minimal pay rises which have not kept pace with inflation."

All members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) will pay an increased rate which is tiered depending on their full time equivalent salary.

Lecturers in FE who are at the start of their career are often on temporary contracts or working at more than one institution.

Staff earning less than £15,000 each year are meant to be excluded from the rise in pension contributions, but Ms Hunt said that they will "get hammered" instead.

Ms Hunt said: "Say I'm working in three different colleges, and between those I earn £14,000. Because I'm on a particular grade or scale, they're looking at what the full time equivalent salary for each of those three would be which would bring me above £15,000."

"We've got a lot of people at the beginning of their careers, which under the current government proposals are going to be doubly penalised in a way. That is going to make it very difficult for us to have a long term sustainable pension scheme for our members, because people simply won't be able to afford to be in it."

Teachers and lecturers are set to lose on average £1,145 a year by April 2012.

The retirement age will also increase to 66 between December 2018 and 2020, with the possibility of a further rise to 68 in the future.

Ms Charters said: "What will upset me most is probably the retirement age being upped as much as the increased contributions. Everyone in FE, we don't get paid as much as other teachers and it is a stressful, difficult job. Upping the retirement age and contributions it's going to put even more stress and strain on people who really don't deserve it. We deserve a decent pension and a decent time to retire."

The final salary scheme would be replaced by a career average scheme, meaning that teachers and lecturers would receive up to 40% less in their retirement.

Pensions will be calculated by retail price index (RPI) rather than consumer price index (CPI), which would mean that a £10,000 a year pension has already lost £150 this year.

Mr Cusack said: "I'm particularly worried about the increase in percentage contributions. The thing that upsets me is that I paid for over 20 years in a particular level of contributions with the expectation of a particular level of benefits, and that's been changed significantly."

Unions are committed to industrial action if they don't make sufficient progress in their negotiations with government.

Ms Charters said: "Yes, of course I'd be willing to go out on strike. I've already been out on strike twice over this issue."

"And if it means after that we have to escalate to 'all out, stay out' then that might be what we have to do. But we're not looking that much further."

Mr Cusack added: "I voted yes for strike action and I'm a believer in democracy, so if the union calls this then I will take a day's strike and lose a day's pay."

The lobby was not only well attended, but organised, effective and without trouble. Parliament has now been warned that if they proceed any further without negotiations, they risk extensive strike action from staff in FE.



Picture by Nick Linford

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FE Week profile

Geoff Russell ~ his story

Janet Murray

@jan_murray

The Chief Executive of the Skills Funding Agency talks to *FE Week*

One crisp Monday morning, back in 2009, Geoff Russell found himself sitting in the department of innovation, universities and skills (DIUS), with a shiny new Blackberry in his hand. The previous Friday, he'd had a call about "a finance job somewhere in Whitehall" but he wasn't exactly sure what the job involved. "I was looking at the BBC website when I spotted that I had been appointed the chief executive of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), which is actually how I found out about it, because no one had actually got round to telling me," he recalls.

"I hadn't the faintest idea what the LSC was, let alone what further education was"

Russell, who is far more candid and witty than his reputation suggests, admits he turned to Google for help. "I hadn't the faintest idea what the LSC was, let alone what further education was," he says, laughing.

He may make light of it now, but he couldn't have taken on the role at a more difficult time. His predecessor Mark Haysom, had just resigned after the college capital funding fiasco and the quango was due to be disbanded to make way for two new organisations – the Young Peoples' Learning Agency (YPLA) and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

A self-confessed workaholic, Russell went into overdrive working "every single day, every single hour that I wasn't sleeping." He even started taking taxis to and from the office to fit in more Blackberry time (funded out of his own pocket, he adds quickly, when his press manager starts eyeballing him).

"I have never done anything so difficult in my life," he says. "It was the biggest quango in the country, had five million customers, pushed out £50m a day doing all the education of 16-year-olds and it had also been abolished. So it needed to be fixed, run and then shut down...so it was about making sure all those people had a home and that the LSC came to a smooth landing while at the same time, the YPLA and the SFA had a safe take-off."

But with over 30 years experience in financial management in both the public and private sectors, Russell seemed well-equipped for the challenge. Raised in Canada,

he relocated to the UK in 1988, when he was working with the accountancy giant KPMG. While he discovered early on in his career that he was a "pretty crappy accountant," fortunately he was a good people manager, something he attributes to his subsequent career success.

Two years after arriving in the UK, Russell was offered a job in the Treasury looking after financial management policy in Whitehall, which proved to be a big culture shock. "I really wondered what sort of fantasy land I was in," he says. "In the public sector, they rarely measure what they deliver and they haven't the faintest idea what it costs – so it is quite hard to measure performance."

He went back to KPMG after a couple of years, as a partner. But with new blood rising up the ranks, he sensed changes were afoot and decided to leave – which is when the LSC role came up.

Russell says he only planned to do a year in the job, but after being sat on by various government officials, agreed to stay on. "I was going round the country saying 'Don't worry it's going to be alright' to everyone and people started saying to me 'It's alright for you, you're bugging off in April, aren't you?' So I felt a bit guilty about that..."

Behind Russell's self-effacing, easy manner, there is a sense that he would like to say more or even, perhaps, that he has a mischievous side. The UK has the most complicated education system in the world, he says, at one point. "They try and simplify it and I have decided that actually what they do is this thing called 'complication...' he breaks off, with a mock-complaint that his press manager is giving him "significant looks."

And while "things have got progressively more sane" since the LSC closed (he no longer works 18-hour days for one), there are still challenges. Government officials, for starters.

"The culture change for someone like me from the private sector, who is used to making decisions rapidly based on, generally, an urgent need, always on imperfect information, without having to ask 16 people...I'm not saying that's wrong, because that's the way government works, but it's hugely frustrating for me, who is not used to working that way," he says.

But he is positive about moving from the "crisis management" involved in shutting down the LSC to a new "lighter, simpler, less bureaucratic" remit at the SFA. While there is currently a price list of some 10,000 courses, by 2013/14 this will have been reduced to just 30, he says. And a single adult skills funding pot should also make life easier for everyone in the sector, he says.

He bats off accusations that the implementation of this long-awaited simplified funding system has been delayed, saying he is not aware of "any specific commitment as to when we would bring in the new system."

The SFA is actually running a kind of dress rehearsal at the moment (which he calls "shadow running"), he says, whereby



providers will be told how much funding they would have got under the new system, so they can make plans for next year. "If you think about it, if you have a price list of 10,000 and you suddenly compress it down to 30, there are going to be some winners and losers."

I'm a relatively impatient person, and I would like to put this system in tomorrow, but you can't blow up the system even with good intentions. One of the comments we consistently got from the consultation was 'you need to give us time to adjust, you need to communicate very clearly,' so we have published quite clearly what we intend to do quite a long time in advance."

Communication is clearly something Russell prides himself on, and he is well known in the sector for his weekly 'what I've been up to' emails to staff. But, he says, not everyone is so keen to hear about his weekend away or what his dogs have been up to.

"I've had emails from quite junior people saying, 'That is just drivel. How could you say that?' And I always write them back and say, 'Well, I'm sorry you think it was drivel, but actually that's my life.'"

Sometimes I might have to say that 200 people are leaving the organisation or bad things are happening. Some people say, 'How can you sit there and talk about your dogs and then go on to talk about horrible things in the organisation?' but the point is... if anyone in this organisation feels that they can write me an email and tell me what they think about the business or themselves or my dogs, that's the kind of culture I want. I want an open culture where we say what we think."

Also unpopular with some staff is his ambition to introduce performance related pay, he says. Some of them have told him, straight out, that they think it is divisive. "And I say, 'yes it is. It is dividing people who are good and people who need to improve'... because we are an operational organisation it is easier to measure what our people deliver, so to my mind, it is not very healthy to have to pay two people the same amount, one working really hard and the other not doing very much."

I think that's divisive, and I'd rather annoy the people who aren't doing very much than annoy the people who are contributing."

While he has no firm plans to move on just yet, if the right opportunity came along, he would consider it, he says coyly, before adding that, earlier this year, he was asked to apply for a job running a university. I tell him I could see him running a new, privately-funded university. "No comment," barks his press officer, rather too jovially and I wonder if I've struck gold.

The biggest reward of working in FE, says Russell, is going out to speak to learners. "I live pretty close to my emotions and some of the stories... I can barely tell this one," he says, and for a horrible moment, it looks as if he might cry.

He goes on to tell a story about a Polish student he met in Leicester who arrived in the UK three years ago with no English and has just been accepted into Oxford. "I have heard stories like that over and over and over again and yes, it's a cliché, to say that you transform people's lives – but you really do."

FE Week expert Q&A

Graham Hoyle talks apprenticeships

Graham Hoyle, Chief Executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers talks to *FE Week*

How do you feel about condensed apprenticeships, such as those being delivered in 12 weeks?

An apprenticeship is quite clear. One, they're employed. Two, an apprenticeship must be a delivery of a complete, sector designed framework which is cleared by the Sector Skills Council (SSC).

It has to have the individual qualifications within the framework, properly accredited by an accredited awarding body, and it should not be transferred.

As far as I'm concerned, if something fits those boxes, it's okay. If a sector said within their design of a framework that the timeframe was acceptable, fit for purpose and what they wanted, theoretically I would go with it.

However, I do believe very strongly that an apprenticeship is work based learning, it is competence based and a competence which we're talking about in my view is not the clearance of a snapshot assessment on a day.

When is it Train to Gain, and when is it called an apprenticeship?

Train to Gain is not a term that anybody uses, nor can we use it. I don't. I simply don't know what that provision is.

There's an apprenticeship, there's pre-apprenticeship, and there's access to apprenticeships. My members say that Train to Gain doesn't exist and hasn't existed. The legacy was finished during the last financial year, and my members have now got a flexible adult budget which includes apprenticeships where there is significant pressure, which we do not resist, to maintain and expand the number of apprenticeships.

We're happy with that, it's our core business. In addition however, it allows them to do other training which is on the government agenda, through NVQs, through access to, or pre apprenticeships. I don't have a title for that.

So if the SSC says that the start and end date of an apprenticeship is okay... it's okay?

I'm saying that fundamentally I think it's for the sector to say what the normal expectation is. I think the framework ought to give an indication of normality. I would still not have it rigid, because it takes us into another rather controversial area, and how to apply that.

So let's take apprentices aged 25 or above. Where people are being taken in by employees from another part, you've got the employee, who has developed skills through a variety of methods, over a variety of time and completed significant elements of a full framework.

Then you have the employer, the government and providers who are now in a position to say that it can be mutually beneficial for them to complete the whole darn thing.

To complete the framework, there is a belief that there's an advantage in doing that. The trouble is, however, that you can't have a pre-determined time scale which is appropriate for a 16 year old starting from scratch, and a 35 year-old who is two thirds of the way through their experience.

So who should specify the time for completion? The SSC?

It's got to be the employer. The SSC, in my view, should have an indicative norm for the completion of the whole framework. The problem is if someone starts from scratch and then develops the framework in 12 weeks... then I would say that needs to be reviewed.

Also, there ought to be scope for the norm to be broken in exceptional circumstances. But if an SSC has said their norm is 12 months, I would have thought they might just have something to say about someone doing it in three.

How do you feel about the contract City & Guilds has with ASDA?

That's an interesting drawing about the role and the remit of City & Guilds, because it moves them away from an awarding body and into a delivery. I can understand the synergy but it's a very... I think there are some very interesting questions about conflicts of interest there. The individual qualification within the framework is properly accredited by an accredited awarding body. Now, although I stick by that, I have to say it's an interesting concept within that definition.

I am not envisaging that the awarding body and the provider, or employer, are the same. I'm not saying it can't happen or shouldn't happen, but at the moment I am not envisaging that and it's the way it's been.

There are some questions which would need to be cleared – and I'm not saying they haven't been cleared. I think if an awarding body are delivering training which they then credit, then I just want to be reassured about the independence and the objectivity about the



apprenticeship. And that's not to say it can't be done.

Do you think the ASDA contract should have been tendered for?

That's a good question. When does public money stop becoming public money? At what point down the chain of public expenditure does it actually pass into the private sector? That's a good question to ask, because at the moment, I want to know that.

If an employer wishes to have a direct contract I believe they ought to do. We're worried about direct contracts to employers as a mandatory, but we're not against it as an option. It's a market mechanism, we understand the market, both the good and the bad, so we're saying if an employer wishes to have a direct contract, we don't actually object to that.

They can then decide to deliver it totally in-house, as a very small number of employers have the capacity to do. Very, very few have taken up that option, or they take them up and sub-contact it out to a provider. So our provider gets it from here, gets it from there. We can live with it.

Who should pay?

Everybody who's been in this game for the last decade or more has got it wrong. What

we have got wrong since the introduction of modern apprenticeships in 1994, is once we opened modern apprenticeships to government investment, what inadvertently happened was they quite reasonably wanted to keep the control over their investment.

And that's right and proper. But what happened is, you moved apprenticeships out of the ownership and development of employers, and made it a government programme.

Now no-one ever said those words, but the perception is we developed a government programme to which employers had to contribute. Which means when times get tough as they are now, the debate is all about how we actually get employers to contribute more.

Now this is the wrong, wrong base point. It's always been employer designed, employer funded, and maybe with a contribution from the individual.

That's the way it's always been until the middle 90s. We should never have lost that picture, and we should be promoting apprenticeships to employers as an investment which they cannot afford not to make.

We ought to be going straight to employers, and saying this is an investment in your bottom line productivity, profitability, and here are the predicted returns from the database. Oh and by the way, the government will actually contribute towards it!

FE Week expert

Don't leave us reaching for the 'delete' key



It's quite possible that despite the hours of typing, the most overused part on a journalists' keyboard is the 'delete' button.

No, that's not because we "always make mistakes", in reality it's what we do with a large proportion of e-mails.

Although some we permanently strike from our worldwide web records are spam, a large amount will be press releases.

There can be a number of reasons. But instead of a rant about why, I thought I'd put together a few steps on how to win our hearts and get your work on our pages.

After all, it's about highlighting what your college is doing to stand out from the rest and showing a sense of pride in your institution.

By making your releases or statements attractive, clearly-written, easy-to-digest and brimming with information, the rest comes easily.

Style

There is a structure to a well-written story - and it can be a good place to start with your copy. It's not essential, but it's by all means very helpful to us.

The first paragraph must tell us all there is to know about the story; don't bury it in the middle. Tell it to us straight and right to the point and we'll be interested. Also, in the main copy, shy away from using "we" or "us" as that's what quotes are for, but I'll come to that.

Pictures

A picture, they say, is worth a thousand words. In this case, its quality can be the difference between publication or trash can. And there's many ways of getting around it. Firstly, invest.

While a top of the range pro DSLR camera can set you back a fair few pennies, cheaper

options, like the so-called "DSLRs for amateurs", will give good results. Another tip: call your local press to pop along and take a few shots. While a specialist publication like ours may be too many miles away to make your press call, your local rag could be more than happy to oblige. They may also, with the right persuasion, provide a JPEG of their shot to send on to other publications - as long as they are guaranteed a 'credit' and you may have to pay for the right in such instances.

Quotes

So you've already told us in the intro about the amazing thing at your college that you want to shout about - and us to publish. Now tell us why and beef up how amazing it is with quotes. Principals, the high-profile visitors to an event, the students, the teachers - you name it. We want to hear from them about why what it is your telling us, is good for them. And don't forget the simple elements, like a full name and title, job and - for the students - their age and where they are from.

Timing

We know our deadlines, because we work so stringently to them. So if you're not sure on them, ask us. And if you have something coming up in the next day or so that you think is really important, give us some notice.

We may be able to hold a space or remove something which we may deem less important. Likewise, sending us something minutes before going to press is unlikely to result in it being used - unless it's Earth shattering news.

Background

There is no such thing as too much detail. As a journalist, we thrive on knowing exactly what the whole situation is with a story, including the history behind it. It gives context to a story, meaning a reader can be fully informed.

Contacts

And finally, this one may seem a little bit obvious, but believe it or not, some releases wing their way into our 21st century pigeonholes with no details on how best to request further information. The e-mail address it was sent from will never suffice - particularly if it gets to us right on deadline. So send us your telephone numbers with it.

This is by no means an extensive list, but a good starting point. If you're in any doubt, don't be afraid to ask questions.

Nick Reinis is Deputy Editor and Chief Reporter at FE Week @fenickr

FE Week expert

Protect student governors

I remember distinctly the first time I attended my first ever College Corporation meeting as a student governor back in 2006. After a day of A levels, I'd change in to my new suit, replace my textbooks with equally heavy meeting papers and enter past the "no food or drinks past this point" sign on the classroom door for pre-meeting drinks and nibbles.

It was one of the most daunting events I have ever experienced. At the time there was very little training available, the other governors didn't really know what to say to me and the meeting papers I had brought with me might as well have been in a foreign language. To top it all, I was by myself.

Luckily a year later the law changed. The Further Education and Training Act 2007 placed in statute a duty for FE corporations and the Learning and Skills Councils to consult with learners on decisions likely to affect them. Later this would result in things like Learner Involvement Strategies but what I was most interested in at that point, was that on 17th December 2007, a revised version of the Instrument and Articles of Government for FE and Sixth Form was released which meant that there would now be two student governors.

Huge benefits were to be reaped from having two student governors; some places even have three. This was a huge step forward, and the result of years of a textbook campaigning spearheaded by the National Union of Students.

This week though NUS, along with UCU and UNISON, raised their outrage in a last minute amendment tabled by Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Lord Hill, Michael Gove's representative in the House of Lords, which would effectively allow corporations to modify or replace their own Instrument and Articles, effectively repealing the duty to comply with having two student members on the corporation.

No one will be shocked to learn that my view is that student governors must stay and that the legal right of learners have access to membership of the very top levels of governance at their institution has to be protected. We should be proud of the fact, that when our mission statements have lines like, "putting learners first" we nail our colours to the mast and without shame give learners an equal vote around the table on the big strategic decisions and hold their senior managers to account.

Here are some arguments which I imagine will arise as this debate develops and why I think they are all wrong.

The legislation has done its job. This doesn't need to be law any more.

There is no evidence that we even have full



compliance of this legislation four years on, let alone to suggest that the job's done. And since when was law used to overcome short term problems, only then to be repealed later on when a Minister says so? Aside from the fact that there's no 'job done' evidence, a duty to consult with learners is a powerful signal as to the nature and ethos of further education.

You don't need student members on the board; we have better ways to consult with our learners.

My view is that no Governing Body is legitimate unless the user group whom they serve are properly represented; and if we're being honest, if we're talking about properly represented; the debate should be on increasing the number of Student Governors. It's a matter of volume. How many local employers are represented, compare that with how many learners you have - then consider the diversity of programmes within that group - then tell me even two is enough.

Student Governors are just not effective.

Which is an excuse to give up? In years gone by training and development opportunities for Student Governors has been weak - but new schemes such as the Student Governor Support Programme by NUS is proving incredibly effective.

We'll form some kind of sub-committee.

Some places already have some kind of 'Student Affairs Sub Committee' of the Corporation. This is a great addition, but, as I said at the beginning, the point is about having a vote at the same table as the rest of the Governors.

We continue to see deregulation as an all or nothing issue. But out of all of the different categories of membership within FE Governance, it is the student positions that are always vulnerable which is why they have to stay in statute. I am not immediately against those who may well be campaigning for greater freedoms; so long as they do so without abdicating their responsibilities to their learners.

Shane Chowen is former Vice President (FE) at NUS @shanechowen

FE Week Agitator

Short 12 week apprenticeships are off the menu



The government's Data Service promised to publish apprenticeship recruitment figures for 2010/11 last Thursday at 9.30am. They did not disappoint, and in the spirit of all things short, within eight minutes *FE Week* published their analysis of the figures.

Whilst the number of 16 year-olds starting apprenticeships rose just 1% from 29,380 to 29,750, compare this to those aged 25 and over, which increased by 257% to 175,500 from 49,140. This included a 396% increase in 45-59 year-olds to 48,650 from 9,810 and 878% increase in 60 year-olds to 3,910 from 400.

The figures also showed a 13% increase in construction and engineering apprenticeships to 32,850. Compare this to customer service, retail and business administration apprenticeships, which combined increased 81% to 132,480.

Most impressively, retail apprenticeships are up 145% to 41,390. Nick Linford, Managing Editor of *FE Week*, tells me that when John Hayes was boasting about the apprenticeship numbers in the corridor at the Association of Employment

and Learning Providers (AELP) Annual Conference, he said he should thank Morrisons.

Digging beneath the 'record growth in apprenticeships' headlines and John Hayes telling parliament it is 'a rosy day', there hang plenty of questions concerning the role of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) in shaping figures. Then there is the Skills Funding Agency, who have made it clear in their statements that the funding priority is for apprenticeships aged 16-24. So what is going on?

Of particular interest has been the rapid rise in very short apprenticeships, or what the National Apprenticeship Agency call 'hot housing'. There is little doubt they are linked to the growth in 'non-traditional' service sector adult apprenticeships.

So, if you are new to the concept of a 12 week apprenticeship, let's get you up to speed with a potted history:

June 12th : Front page of the first edition of *FE Week* shouts: "Concern at 12 week apprenticeships". The story details 12 week call centre apprenticeships delivered by Synapse (owned by Elmfield Training). A short time later the Synapse website simply stated "we no longer deliver apprenticeships".

The *FE Week* article also referred to the apprenticeships advertised in as few as 12 weeks, by the De Vere Academy, where they plan to deliver 10,000 over three years.

June 21st : Simon Waugh, The Chief Executive of the NAS, presents a slide at the AELP Annual Conference, which says: "we still need to eradicate 'low train' and 'hot-house' delivery models."

July 18th : The Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) makes a statement which said NAS will now be "accountable for ensuring quality and standards and securing value for money for public investment in apprenticeships. The underpinning services that will support these new arrangements are currently being finalised within the NAS and Skills Funding Agency and are expected to be in place by early autumn."

August 30th : NAS publish a two page 'Statement on the Quality of Apprenticeship Delivery Models'. This includes the sentence: "NAS will work with the Skills Funding Agency and look critically at Apprenticeships delivered in a condensed way."

September 12th : *FE Week* reports on 12 week apprenticeships advertised on The Security Training School website, a sub-contractor to Leeds and Newham College.

September 19th : *FE Week* reports on 12 week apprenticeships in Level 2 Railway Engineering, advertised on the Train'd Up website.

October 18th : *FE Week* approaches NAS for comment regarding more than 700 vacancies on their website for 12 and 16 week

Apprenticeships at the De Vere Academy.

October 21st : *FE Week* reports on the De Vere 12 week apprenticeships, including comment from NAS that 12 week programmes are now 'under review'. NAS also write to both the Association of Colleges (AoC) and AELP regarding the review.

October 25th : NAS publish a statement on 'short apprenticeships', which says: "our priority will be to remove Apprenticeship funding from provision which fails to meet the required standard". The statement goes on: "We have already indicated to De Vere that their programme does not meet the comprehensive standards for Apprenticeship programmes".

October 27th : NAS publish a statement on Retail Apprenticeships, in which David Way, Chief Operating Officer of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) said: "Where the quality of Apprenticeship delivery falls below the standard required, the Skills Funding Agency and the NAS will reform provision to comply".

History lesson over for now, but plenty to consider and for NAS to resolve. Then there is tackling the lack of investment from the big employers delivering tens of thousands of adult apprenticeships to their existing staff. As I've asked before, remind me again why neither Morrisons nor Asda pay a penny for their apprenticeships? In all seriousness, I wish David Way the best of luck. Taxi for Simon Waugh?



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FE Week gets technical

FE Week brings you, on one handy **pull-out**, a summary of Apprenticeship starts data from the October Statistical First Release: http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr_current/

QUICK FACTS

Total apprenticeship starts increases
163,000 (58%) to 442,700 in 2010/11

Under 19 up 11,530 (10%)
19-24 up 25,100 (22%)
25+ up 126,360 (257%)

DESIGNED BY
DANIEL DUKE
FOR
FE WEEK

TOP FIVE: HIGHEST NUMBER OF STARTS BY APPRENTICESHIP FRAMEWORKS (2010/11)

Customer
Service

53,110



Health &
Social Care

50,230



Retail

41,390



Business
Administration

32,390



Hospitality &
Catering

29,060



Comparison with two more 'traditional' frameworks

Engineering

17,910



Construction

14,690



NUMBER OF STARTS BY AGE GROUP



16-18
APPRENTICESHIPS



19-24
APPRENTICESHIPS



25 +
APPRENTICESHIPS

09/10

116,780

113,770

49,140

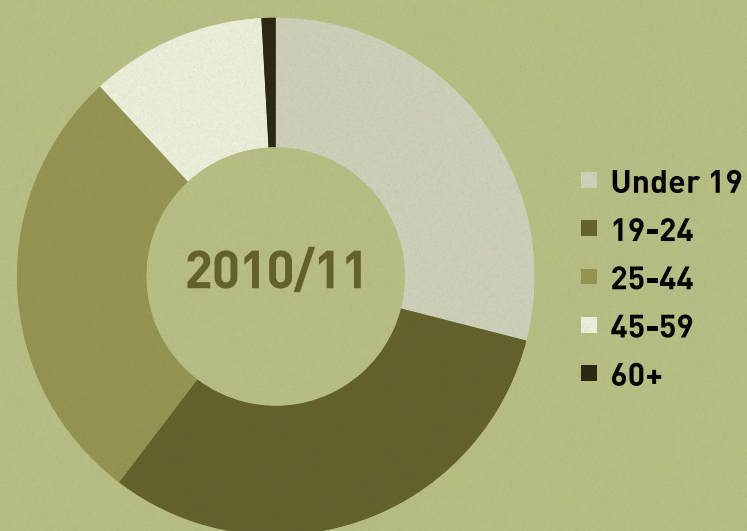
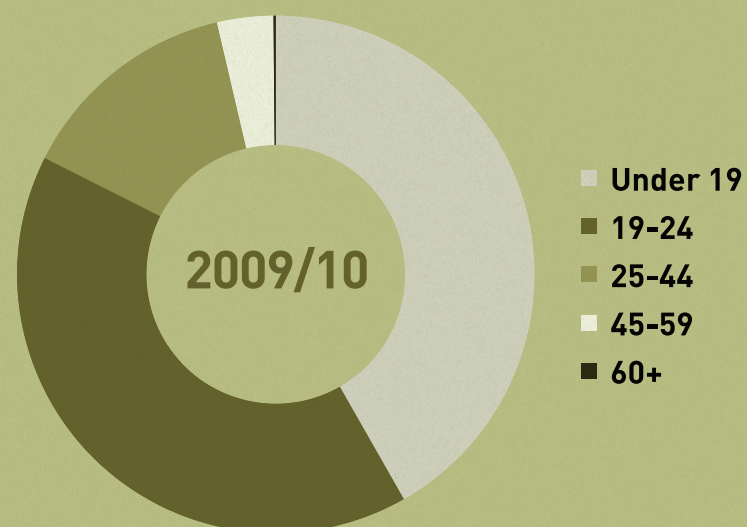
10/11

128,310

138,870

175,500

APPRENTICESHIP STARTS BY AGE



“This Government’s unprecedented investment is working for businesses and creating long term career opportunities for record numbers of trainees.”

-Business Secretary Vince Cable

All Age Apprenticeships Programme Starts (2005/06 to 2010/11)



FE Week campus round-up

Hatton proves a hit for Preston College boxer



Former boxing World champion Ricky Hatton is set to make a dramatic return to the ring - but instead of throwing leather he will be barking the orders.

'The Hitman' has taken out a trainers licence and the first fighter to team up with him is Preston College sports student and welterweight hopeful Adam Little.

Hatton was in Little's corner when his protégé boxed at Oldham Sports Centre and the future looks bright for both the ex-champ and the Foundation Degree Sports student.

Hatton, a former two-weight world champion said: "This is the biggest buzz I

have had since my fighting days. When I was going through my depression I would nip off to the pub, but I don't want to now.

"I am looking forward to work every day and every evening I am sat up thinking what new things we can do in training."

Little (20) is doing well, having already won his first three professional contests. Hatton said: "I boxed to be the best in the world and nothing has changed now I've become a trainer.

"Adam is really talented and will get to the stage where he has several title belts wrapped around his waist."

Burton and South Derbyshire College revs into pole position at creative arts awards



Graphic design students from Burton and South Derbyshire College have scooped three top awards at a prestigious Young Creative Chevrolet Awards night.

Laura Hobson (19), from Mickleover, in Derbyshire, was the biggest winner of the night, winning first place in the UK Visual Arts Category and second in the European leg, thanks to her special '100 years of Chevrolet' poster design.

Fellow BSDC students Charlotte Saunt (21), from Derbyshire, and Joe Ellison, (18), from Derbyshire, gained second and third places respectively in the UK category, attracting praise for the high standard of their work.

The international awards take place every year and celebrate the very best in young creative talent. This year more than 550 projects were submitted for entry to the competition, from 155 educational institutions in 22 countries.

The awards were judged by a respected international panel of industry leaders from the fields of fashion, music, photography, video and visual arts design.

Chris Beech, programme area manager at the college, said: "Throughout her studies Laura worked as a freelance graphic designer and web designer for several local studios, yet never missed a lesson.

"She has been a model student often achieving above what was required and working professionally with the College on a number of projects, completing all course work to Distinction level."

Laura now plans to continue her freelance work whilst studying for a BA (Hons) in Graphic Design at Nottingham Trent University.

She said: "My time at the college has taught me how to explore my ideas more, and to always challenge myself."



TyneMet and Northam Community College to reboot science, tech and maths courses

Engineering staff from TyneMet College, four teachers from Northam Community Technology College and Jo Lyons from the North Tyneside Education Business Partnership, visited Siemens' Energy Services Plant.

Staff from the two colleges discussed teaching and learning resources with experts at the major firm.

While there, they met Carl Hopper, Energy Services STEM Ambassador, to discuss ways of actively driving the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) agenda in North Tyneside forward.

The visit enabled the group to share good practice and discuss teaching and learning resources which will lead to enhancing and enriching the curriculum, both inside and outside the classroom. Staff hope that these measures will help to motivate students towards STEM.

Mick Burton, head of engineering at TyneMet, said: "Collaboration between industry and education is essential.

"It underpins the college's commitment to providing outstanding education and training so students, the local area and employers can succeed and prosper."



Northampton College gets shiny new facilities

Staff and students are enjoying top class facilities after moving into Phase One of Northampton College's new building at Booth Lane.

Professional theatre spaces, state-of-the-art automotive spray booths and dedicated science labs with central floating teaching islands are just some of the latest teaching technologies in the building which opened for learning back in April.

The new 22,000 square metre structure is also on target to achieve an 'excellent' BREEAM rating for best practise in sustainable design.

With that aspect of the development complete, the second and final phase is well underway, with completion set for July and full access from late 2012.

Principal Len Closs said: "We have been working towards this exciting moment since we first sought the go ahead, back in 2006, for what was to become one of the country's most innovative and ambitious FE College improvement ventures.

"Since then we have extended our Lower Mounts site in the Town Centre and have

moved into the first phase of our new landmark building at Booth Lane.

"The move marks a momentous period in our 38 year history and the Town and its students are set to benefit from the first rate facilities for generations to come."

Ray Starkey, vice principal planning and business development, said: "I have worked at the college for 34 years so have seen lots of changes. The Booth Lane site was very small back in the 70s with only 300 or so students - today we have thousands."

Lecturer Jan Bell (63) started working at Booth Lane in 1981 and has taught secretarial, business, IT, customer service, teaching, counselling and those with special educational needs.

Looking back, she said: "When I think back the first thing that springs to mind is how the use of computer technology has moved on.

"In the new building we will have fantastic computer facilities and PCs and mobile phones are a way of life now but I remember when we used to use electronic typewriters and in a room where there were over 20 machines that was quite noisy."



Sheffield City College Principal is a Fellow

A principal hopes to promote excellence in science skills after being appointed a founding Fellow of a new national organisation.

Sheffield City College Principal Julie Byrne has joined the NEF Institute of Innovation and Knowledge Exchange, which promotes excellence in science and innovation, and was launched at The Royal Society in London.

Mrs Byrne said: "I am delighted to be recognised on behalf of the college for the ground breaking work we have done in partnership with the New Engineering Foundation."

"This has involved developing greater innovation, and knowledge exchange and skills for our staff and students, particularly in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics areas of the curriculum."

The appointment follows the college's commitment to advancing the knowledge and science, dental, engineering and information technology skills of both staff and students.

In Sheffield, there has been a shortage of science, aviation and information technology technicians. The college has responded by increasing the number of course places available, and developing programmes to meet business and industry needs and maximise employment opportunities.

The New Engineering Foundation is a science and technical education charity and think-tank.

For more information, visit www.thenef.org.uk and www.theike.org.

Weston College don denim for Genes day



Wearing blue jeans helped fund raising students collect more than £100 for Jeans for Genes Day at Weston College.

Staff and students from the Care and Early Learning Department swapped their usual clothes for blue jeans to raise £105 for the national charity which helps fund research and care for children with genetic disorders.

Health and social care co-ordinator Sarah-Jane Lewis said: "They did so well for a brilliant cause."

"It's important students contribute to

Stroud principal gets OBE for service to FE



A proud principal picked up her honour after being awarded an OBE from the Princess Royal. The official ceremony to award Stroud College principal Dr Beri Hare with an OBE took place at Buckingham Palace.

The award, which was presented by Princess Anne, recognises Dr Hare's services to further education.

Dr Hare said: "It was a wonderful day and it was my privilege to represent our staff in accepting the honour. I hope the award will bring more recognition to everyone who works at Stroud College, for the difference they make every day to creating better life and learning opportunities for our students."

Dr Hare became principal of Stroud College in 2006, having moved there from Bolton Community College in Lancashire where she was vice principal. A passionate believer in the role of education for changing young people's lives, Dr Hare has steered Stroud College to a position of strength, with the college judged recently by Ofsted to be good with outstanding features.

Stroud College's Chair of Governors, Mike Farmer said: "Beri's award is richly deserved not only for all that she has achieved at Stroud College, but also for her achievements at her former colleges, as a member of the inspectorate, and for her time as a freelance consultant to colleges across the country."



Sporty stars show skills at Priestly College

Sport students at Priestley College enjoyed a splashing good time as they earned success at their first ever competition.

The college's newly formed swimming team, which is made up of 11 students, donned their goggles and swim caps to participate in the English Schools Swimming Association's North West Finals at Everton Park in Liverpool.

Team Priestley entered both male and female teams and it was the girls who led from the front landing second place in the freestyle relay and third place in the medley relay.

Not to be out done, the boys finished second in the medley relay.

The students are now eagerly waiting to hear whether they have done enough to qualify for the national championships in Southampton.

Curriculum manager Nigel Howells said: "All our students excelled, especially taking into account they were up against a lot of talented opposition including teams from private and independent schools and colleges."

"We are sure this is just the beginning

for the team and hope to participate in Southampton, should we get the opportunity to go the national finals."

Meanwhile, young sports coaches (pictured above) at the college were given an insightful presentation on the nature of disabled sport.

Jordan Raynes and Mike Smith, from Stockport County's community programme, and Dawn Georgeson from the Cheshire FA were on campus to prepare the students for their own up and coming roles in the local community.

Jordan, captain of the Cerebral Palsy England football team, had the students transfixed by his story, as he described overcoming adversity to realise his dreams.

He has since gone onto represent his country at World and European Championships, Paralympic games and will also be part of London 2012.

Priestley tutor Danielle Toward said: "Jordan's story was truly empowering and a source of inspiration for our students who are working towards a range of coaching, fitness and leadership awards that run alongside our main academic programmes."

South Thames College drums up talent



A graduate from South Thames College has hit the big time, touring with the likes of Jessie J and Wretch 32.

Nathaniel Fuller (20) went to South Thames College on an entry level course with no formal qualifications. His tutor described his school days as a "write-off" but during this time he found his calling as a drummer. Music was a natural choice for the young star.

"I was always musical and played the drums at the age of three. When I got a bit older I learnt how to play the drums properly and started to play for my Church each week. Through his talent, Nathaniel has been lucky enough to meet the likes of Tinie Tempah, Example, Yasmin, Ms Dynamite and even Ed Sheeran.

Nathaniel said of the course at South Thames College: "It was a really good starting point and helped along the way and ensured I kept learning. It was also good from a performance angle because I was playing everyday and helped me to make contacts in the industry."

South Thames College tutor Nick Osbourne said: "Nathaniel had a great attitude towards his work and a good feel towards music. He did very well on his course and progressed due to his great musical abilities. South Thames College has a track record of success with its students and is proud to offer courses which act as a springboard, launching the talent of tomorrow into their chosen industries."

FE Week events...

Government plans to solve debt by putting students in the red

Nick Summers

@summersnicholas

The Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) are planning to replace funding with loans, for classroom and workplace adults (24+) learners studying Level 3 and above.

Their consultation closed last Friday and *FE Week* held a debate at the House of Commons to discuss its pros and cons.

The proposals for a loans system in further education (FE) were met with caution, and hostility by some. The attendees appreciated the current state of the British economy, as well as the government drive to cut spending and the overwhelming deficit.

But the key question was whether introducing loans to FE from 2013/14 was the right policy.

The debate included contributions from Adrian Barley (Chair of the BIS Select Committee), Gordon Marsden (Shadow Minister for FE and Skills), representatives from the University and College Union (UCU), Daniel Khan (Chief Executive of Open College Network London Region) and Denise Brown-Sackey (Principal of Newham College).

The biggest issues surrounded how untested the proposals were and how no-one could predict the consequences of

“In effect this is an experiment and we don’t know what the consequences will be”

implementing such a significant loans system.

Gordon Marsden said: “It hasn’t been tried yet. Whether it will be a good idea may become apparent as we go down the route.”

Adrian Barley added: “I think it’s fair to say that in effect this is an experiment and we don’t know what the consequences will be. And there will be many unintended consequences. And it’s very difficult to fully anticipate the way it will work out.”

Liz Shannon, Head of Parliamentary and External Affairs at UCU, said: “We aren’t in favour of having loans in this way. This entire consultation is going on in a bubble, and people aren’t really aware of it.”

Denise Brown-Sackey, Principal at Newham College of FE, said that she was concerned with how an FE loans system would affect her organisation’s ability to recruit adults.

Ms Brown-Sackey said: “I just think it’s an untested model. We need to look at some statistical analysis to see how many Level 3 learners progress onto higher education (HE),

and I’d suggest that if it’s a high number of learners you start to have the notion that people are not going to take on the 4 years’ worth of debt to be educated to a degree.”

The proposals, if put into effect, would mean that learners apply for a loan to meet the upfront contribution costs of their course.

Students would receive up to £4,000, and this would be paid by the government directly to the FE provider.

The loan amount would vary depending on the funding rate of the course or qualification, and learners would only be required to pay the money back once they are earning £21,000 or more.

Any remaining debt would be written off after 30 years.

The proposals echo the current loans system used in HE, a move which some argue is already controversial and unsuitable for FE.

Mr Barley said: “They’re modelling on the basis of what might be an optimistic assumption of payback of loans in HE.

“It could well be that if that is extended to FE and part-time courses, then if they go into lower income occupations there will be a higher rate of default of non-payment.”

Shane Chowen, an independent policy consultant, said that he was concerned with how many political figures were talking about FE learners as if they were in HE.

Mr Chowen said: “They use words like mobile, that people are free and that they’re empowered. The reality is that FE learners are nothing like HE learners. They’re not mobile.”

The FE loans system is a difficult proposition, but one many can sympathise with given the country’s bleak economic standing.

Mr Barley said: “It’s a clear demonstration, as with the funding of HE, that this is a finance driven set of proposals. It’s not based on a core educational, philosophical basis, or indeed an economic needs basis.”

Mr Marsden said: “Who knows what the circumstances will be in 2013/14. The present circumstances I would suggest are as adverse as they could possibly be in terms of setting a context for this introduction. So I do think there’s a real issue there.”

“The government is going on the philosophical basis of ‘nudge’ for many of the things they’re trying to do.

“Not having top down decision making, but putting in frame policies that nudge people in a particular direction,” Mr Marsden added.

The concept of encouraging student debt, however, is a less than perfect solution for tackling the government’s own debt problems.

Ms Brown-Sackey said: “The whole notion of encouraging learners to take on debt for education is counter intuitive for the government policy on debt.



Gordon Marsden, Shadow Minister for FE and Skills (at the *FE Week* debate). Pictures by Nick Linford

“This government talks constantly about how we’ve got to get the national debt down, and then trying to get learners to increase

“The reality is that FE learners and nothing like HE learners. They’re not mobile.”

their personal debt for education and training.”

Ms Brown-Sackey said: “If you’re turning off your potential adult workforce at Level 3, and preventing them in the education and training market because of the amount of debt they’re going to take on, how are you going to get your workforce qualified to Level three?”

There are other concerns with the government’s proposals though.

The consultation states that the Student

Loans Company (SLC) will be responsible for loan applications, assessment, the payment to colleges, and the repayments from learners.

Mr Chowen added that he was also concerned with the administrative capacity of the SLC to deal with such a loans system.

“It’s almost every year that we hear of some kind of horror story where ‘x’ number of people don’t get their loans on time, and that causes all sorts of problems for people paying rent.”

Professor Daniel Khan came armed with London registration data for the Level 3 Access to HE Diploma in 2009/10.

He pointed out that of the 6,882 registrations, 47% were for people age 25 and over.

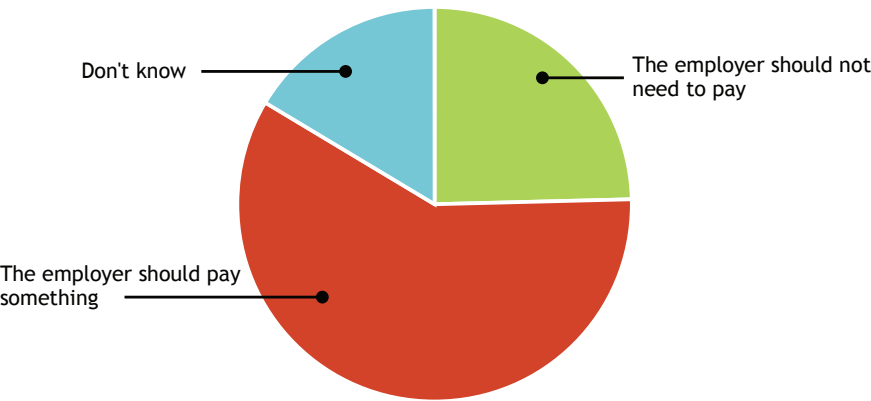
Of these, 72% were female, adding to concerns that the policy of introducing loans for these qualifications would disproportionately affect women.

As the debate concluded attendees expressed their expectation that many of these points would be raised with BIS.

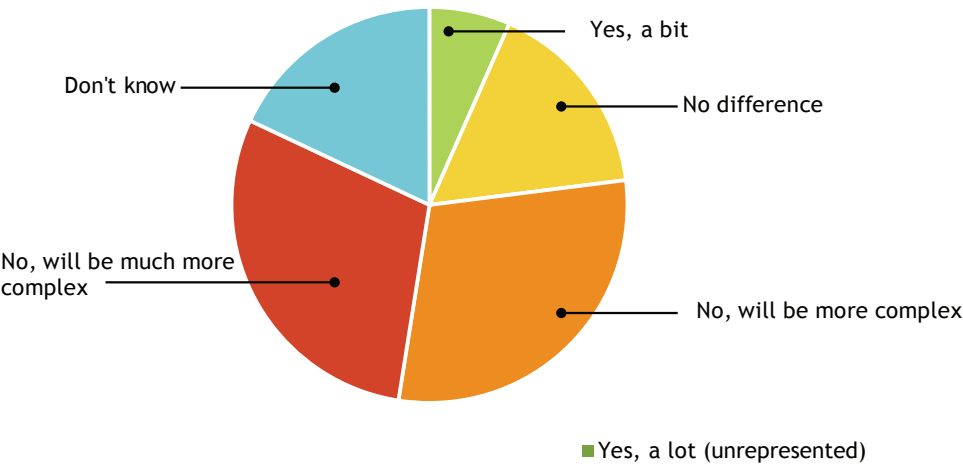
Reader Survey

FE Week asked readers what they thought about the Loans policy..

When a learner takes out an Apprenticeship loan, should the employer continue to be allowed not to contribute any cash?



The Loan policy assumes the planned funding reform will make it easier to implement. Do you think planned 'simplification' for 19+ funding will be achieved?



Lisa Johnson and Liz Shannon (UCU)



Shane Chowen, FE Consultant



Adrian Bailey, MP and chair of BIS Select Committee and Denise Sackey-Brown, Principal at Newham College



Loan Attribute	FE Loans	HE Loans
Learning type	Level 3/4	First full degree
Loan amount:	Up to £4,000 (but dependent on funding rates)	Up to £9,000 per annum
Repayment Threshold	£21,000	£21,000
Threshold Growth	Yearly with earnings	Yearly with earnings
Repayment Period	30 years	30 years
Repayment Rate	9% of earnings > threshold	9% of earnings > threshold
Date repayment starts	April following learner leaving course	April following student finishing course (for full-time HE)
Interest rate for below threshold	RPI	RPI
Interest rate for threshold to £41k	Between RPI & RPI + 3% %	Between RPI & RPI + 3% %
Interest rate for £41k+	RPI + 3%*	RPI + 3%*

Comparison of FE and HE loan conditions.

Source: BIS New Challenges, New Chances: Further Education Loans 2011

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- significant relevant experience of quality management strategies
- operational experience of performance management
- experience of developing strategies which have improved performance and student outcomes
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North Hertfordshire College



Assistant Principal eCollege

£55,000 p.a. + £5,000 PRP

Full Time

Ref: RS/05

North Hertfordshire College is working towards excellence and is committed to developing both staff and learners to achieve their full potential. We have the following exciting role that would suit an individual who thrives on change and welcomes a challenge.

We are looking for a visionary, strategic-minded leader, who has the ability to design, develop and deliver the technology enabled college of the future. This role requires an exceptional relationship builder, with the knowledge and skills needed to ensure the college maximises its use of technology for learning and service delivery.

Closing date for applications: 10 November 2011

Interview date: 22 November 2011

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and our staff share in this environment.

Please visit our website www.nhc.ac.uk to download the job description and to apply on-line

Curriculum Manager: Art and Design

Salary: £37,059 - £41,340



Art and design provision at Newcastle-under-Lyme College (NULC) has a long established reputation for excellence and our courses consistently recruit from well outside of the immediate North Staffordshire area.

In 2011/12 we have c450 full-time students enrolled on courses from Level 2 up to Foundation Degree covering art & design, graphics, fashion & textiles, media, photography, music & music technology and performing arts. HE programmes are well established and we have ambitions to further develop work based learning and links with employers generally.

Success rates for the area have been consistently well above national averages and achievement rates are outstanding. The College moved to a brand new campus in 2010 and as a result staff and students enjoy some of the best facilities to be found anywhere in the sector.

We ask our Curriculum Managers to concentrate on three core areas: curriculum development, raising standards of teaching and learning and the leadership of staff. To be successful in this we believe you should have significant post-qualification experience and a proven track record of motivating and leading people to achieve excellence.

As a key member of the Faculty Management Team you will have lots of scope to broaden your experience and in particular there will be opportunities for the further development of apprenticeships and HE programmes. You should have experience in, and be able to contribute to the teaching of one or more programme areas offered within the curriculum area.

For an application form and further details please contact Human Resources Department on **01782 254123** (24 hour answerphone) or email vacancies@nulc.ac.uk Alternatively you can download the application pack from www.nulc.ac.uk/jobs

The closing date for completed applications is **11 November 2011**

This college is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All college based positions are subject to enhanced CRB check and are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

We welcome applications from ethnic minority candidates and people with disabilities.

FE Week Sudoku challenge

3			8		7		9	
	1	7	2					
4		8			6			
7	4		5				1	2
	2		7	6	9		4	
8	3				1		5	6
			6			5		7
					2	8	3	
	7		9		5			1

Difficulty:
EASY

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

		5	3				8	
							2	
1				9		5		4
		9		6			7	
7		2	5		1	9		8
	8			2		4		
6		3		8				7
	9							
	1				5	6		

Difficulty:
HARD

Let's play: We have shaded 4 squares on this sudoku grid. Complete the puzzle and rearrange the numbers on the shaded squares to reveal a famous year.

Email your entries to: competitions@feweek.co.uk
The winner will receive an FE Week mug!

FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of FE Week's biggest and smallest fan!

"Mostly this week I have been learning to walk"

You can also follow our FE Week mini-mascot on Twitter [@daniellinford](https://twitter.com/daniellinford)

